



Miami Art Museum

Norway's Glacial Fiords Meet South Florida's Steamy Summer
at Miami Art Museum

Shimon Attie
July 21 – October 8, 2006

The icy waters of Scandinavian fiords run through the steamy South Florida summer with Shimon Attie's video installation *Light Under Night*, on view in MAM's New Work Gallery July 21 to October 8. The three-screen video installation accompanied by a full surround-sound environment leads viewers into the in-between world of a subterranean hydroelectric plant in Rjukan, Norway. *Light Under Night* is exhibited with *The Heroes of Telemark*, a series of lightboxes that depict some of the few remaining employees at the hydroelectric plant. The exhibition is curated by Assistant Director for Programs/Senior Curator Peter Boswell as part of New Work, a series of projects by leading contemporary artists. Attie will introduce the exhibition with an artist talk at 6:30pm during the exhibition's members' preview on Thursday, July 20 from 5 to 8:30 pm.

"Rjukan was the site where electricity was generated from waterfalls for the first time a century ago. It also achieved fame during World War II when Norwegian freedom fighters sabotaged a plant Hitler had commandeered to manufacture 'heavy water' for an atom bomb," Boswell said. "The video suggests a poetic junction between nature, technology and culture, while the light boxes examine the image of the worker/hero."

Because Rjukan lies at the base of a steep valley which blocks out direct sunlight for much of the year, it is one of the darkest, most sun-starved places in Norway. Yet, paradoxically, the town produced a significant portion of Norway's electricity and light for much of the last century, *Light Under Night*, leads viewers between an idyllic landscape of magical waterfalls flickering with mysterious light and the deep, strange subterranean power plant which provides light to the world above. The soundtrack by composer Bill Toles includes a pair of regional folksongs which re-appear in different forms throughout

the video telling of a magical creature that inhabits the waterfalls and a soaring bird who sees all below from on high.

For the *Heroes of Telemark*, Attie has photographed some of the few remaining physical laborers, carpenters, mechanics and electricians still employed at Rjukan after years of downsizing. The workers are presented in front of their private homes—trophy homes for decades of service—in full company gear, collapsing the boundary between the corporate and the individual. By employing the aesthetics of film and advertising photography, Attie challenges the construction of corporate identity and national mythology.”

Light Under Night premiered in Oslo’s Symphony Hall in December 2005, an event attended by the King of Norway. *The Heroes of Telemark* will be presented for the first time at MAM.

Attie came to international attention in the 1990s with a series of installations collectively titled 'Sites Unseen'. By projecting images of their buried histories onto various public sites, Attie aimed to investigate our problematic relationship with the remembered and mediated past. As Attie has put it, his work “seeks to give visual form to the personal and collective histories that are latent—but not visible—within our cities' architecture.”

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in California in 1957, Shimon Attie currently lives in New York, after spending much of the 1990s living and working in Berlin. He has described his work “as a kind of peeling back of the wallpaper of today to reveal the histories buried underneath.”

His art is the subject of three books: *The Writing on the Wall: Projections in Berlin’s Jewish Quarter*; *Sites Unseen: Shimon Attie’s European Projects* (published in conjunction with Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art); and *The History of Another* (published by Twin Palms Press in conjunction with Chicago’s Museum of Contemporary Photography).

Attie’s photographs and videos have been featured in solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; the RISD Museum, Providence; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; The Museum of the Diaspora, Tel Aviv; and the Museum for German History, Berlin. He has been the recipient of visual arts fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the German Ministry of Culture, and the American Academy in Rome and has been awarded the 2006 Jewish Cultural Achievement Award in Visual Art by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Peter Boswell has been Assistant Director for Programs/Senior Curator at the Miami Art Museum since September 1999. He is responsible for oversight of all activities of the curatorial and education departments at the museum, including exhibitions and public

programs. Exhibitions he has curated at MAM include *Miami Currents: Linking Collection and Community* (with Lorie Mertes and Cheryl Hartup) (2002); *New Work: Donald Lipski* (2002); *New Work: Teresita Fernández* (2002); *New Work: Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt* (2003); *Between Art and Life: From Joseph Cornell to Gabriel Orozco* (2004); *Robert Rauschenberg* (2005); *Wangechi Mutu* (2005); *Mapping Space: Selections from the Collection* (with René Morales); *Vik Muniz: Reflex* (2006) and *Big Juicy Paintings (and more)* (2006). Prior to joining MAM, Mr. Boswell served for three years as Heiskell Arts Director at the American Academy in Rome and for 10 years on the curatorial staff of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Mr. Boswell has a BA with a major in Art History from the University of California, Berkeley, and an MA in Art History from Stanford University.

Related Publications and Programs

Gallery Notes

A free, illustrated brochure with an essay by curator Peter Boswell provides background information and an in-depth examination of the exhibition. Available in the galleries.

Opening Reception

Thursday, July 20, 2006

5 to 8:30pm

DJ, hors d'oeuvres, donation bar

MAM Members free. Non-members \$10

Illustrated talk by Shimon Attie

6:30 to 7:15pm

Sundays are Free at MAM

12 – 5pm

Guided tours of the exhibition every Sunday at 2pm

Second Saturdays are Free for Families

Second Saturday of every month, 1 – 4pm

Drop in to enjoy fun, interactive programs. Families of all ages explore MAM together, find inspiration to create works of art, and participate in hands-on activities led by Gallery Teachers.

Media Contact:

Mitchell Snow

305-375-1705

snowmit@miamidade.gov

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Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, the Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners.

101 West Flagler St.
Miami, FL 33130
305-375-3000
miamiartmuseum.org

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\$5 at 50 NW 2nd Ave
between Flagler St and NW 1st St